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THEOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS OF RITSCHL

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I

The material for theology is given in the revelation of God in the historical person of Jesus Christ.

We can understand God only when we know him through Christ. . . . Not only are God and all his operations of grace to be construed through the revelation of Christ, but even sin can be appreciated only in the virtue of the forgiveness of sins, which is Christ's especial gift.¹

This perfect knowledge of God Christianity claims to have, because the community originates in Jesus Christ, who as Son of God ascribes to himself perfect knowledge of the Father.²

Kattenbusch thinks³ it is the characteristic of Ritschl that he taught that the Christian system of dogmatics is to be formed from this idea, namely,

that concerning God, is to be thought as concerning Christ. God's historical self-testification is the beginning and not the conclusion of dogmatic reflection. To have brought this up is Ritschl's significance, and this will abide though individual ideas of his thought fall away.

For Ritschl the whole historical revelation is to be understood in the light of the historical person of Jesus Christ. The revelation of the Old Testament, especially that of the prophets, was a preparation for him and finds its culmination in him. The early Christian community sprang from his person; they shared his revelation, and preached his message to the world.

To get the full significance of the revelation of Christ, it is necessary to know how the early community viewed him.

For even if his statements seem perfectly clear, their significance becomes completely intelligible only when we see how they are reflected in the consciousness

¹ Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* (translated by H. R. MacKintosh), Vol. III, p. 7; referred to in this essay as J. R.

² *Instruction in the Christian Religion* (translated by Alice Mead Swing), p. 172.

³ *Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl*, p. 82.

of those who believe in him, and how the members of the Christian community trace back their consciousness of pardon to the person and the action and passion of Jesus.⁴

It is necessary, in order to understand a historical religion, that we know the formative epoch of its history.

For Christianity in particular the correctness of this observation results especially from its character as the religion of reconciliation with God. The epoch of its foundation includes not merely the personal work of Christ, but also the first generation of this community, since without this definite result the view of the founder could not be recognized as effective.⁵

It is because the New Testament presents the teaching and work of Jesus, and his effect upon the first community, that the material of dogmatics should be derived from it and from it alone. Ritschl does not hold to any mechanical inspiration theory. He recognizes the historical growth of the Scriptures, and he advocates a historical and grammatical interpretation. But the New Testament contains the purest deposit of the revelation of God as manifested in the historical person of Jesus Christ and appropriated by the early community. As a historical critic Ritschl takes a conservative position. The New Testament books are separated from all other works in that they interpret the teachings of Jesus in line with the Old Testament thought, and do not reflect the heresies which arose a little later in the history of the community.

The theology which aims to present the authentic content of the Christian religion in positive form must draw the same from the books of the New Testament and from no other source.⁶

But the theologian does not have his material presented in the New Testament in as objective a manner as the scientist would find his in a collection of insects; and they do not proceed by the same method. If it be remembered that the living revelation is in the community and that the community still exists, while the Scriptures are the literary deposit of the formative period of that community, then one can see that it is absolutely necessary, in order to appropriate the revelation of God and to deal with the data of theology, that one be a living member of that community. The revelation of God is

⁴ *J. R.*, sec. I.

⁵ *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, Vol. II, Introduction.

⁶ *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, Vol. II, "Introduction to Biblical Theology."

in Jesus Christ, and one shares it as one lives in the community established by Jesus, "and shares in the forgiveness of sins which is his gift to the community."

Only he who has this relation to the founder of our religion will be interested to discover the value and significance of Jesus, and it is only in this relation that his inner life can be experienced and valued.

Authentic and complete knowledge of Jesus' significance—his significance, that is, as a founder of religion—depends then on one's reckoning oneself part of the community which he founded, and this precisely in so far as it believes itself to have received the forgiveness of sins as his peculiar gift. This religious faith does not take an unhistorical view of Jesus. It is quite possible to reach a historical estimate of him without first divesting oneself of this faith, this religious valuation of his person. The opposite view is one of the characteristics which mark the great untruth which exerts a deceptive and confusing influence under the name of a historical absence of presuppositions. . . . We can discover the full compass of his historical activity solely from the faith in the Christian community. . . . We are able to know and understand God, sin, conversion and eternal life in the Christian sense, only so far as we consciously and intentionally reckon ourselves members of the community which Christ has founded.⁷

The theologian then must stand within the redeemed community of Christ to interpret his material which he derives from the New Testament. It is from this position that he is enabled to construct a system of dogmatics. From this attitude he is enabled to decide whether to incorporate or reject certain parts of New Testament teaching. Dogmatics is not mere biblical theology. There are parts of the New Testament teaching which are local and temporal, and have no place in dogmatics. The theologian, as member of the Christian community sharing the forgiveness of sins, must value his material. All that makes more real and clear the revelation of God in Jesus Christ has a place in his system. All that serves to obscure or adulterate that revelation must be excluded. It matters not whether it comes from science, metaphysics, or the Scriptures. "The person of Christ must be regarded as the ground of knowledge to be used in the definition of every doctrine."

Inasmuch as the central fact of this revelation is the forgiveness of sins, all parts of a system of theology must center around this

⁷ *J. R.*, Vol. III, sec. 1.

truth. Only truths of salvation have a place in theology. All propositions of dogmatics are truths of faith. "Even sin can be appreciated only in virtue of the forgiveness of sins." Theology is intensely practical. "We must not admit into dogmatics anything which cannot be employed in preaching and in the intercourse of Christians with one another."⁸

From this religious point of view one can see why Ritschl is so positive in his rejection of natural theology. There can be no mixture of the rich truths of salvation with the barren and alien results of natural speculation. Such a result is detrimental to the practical and saving character of theological knowledge. But in the second place—and this is the more important—the method of natural theology is so opposed to the method of the Christian theologian that when one takes the position which the former as a science requires, one is unable to appropriate and value the Christian revelation itself. To attain religious knowledge of God, one must be a Christian. One is morally and religiously interested in the truths he seeks. His blessedness and salvation depend on them, and his attitude must be one of unconditional trust, if he would know God as revealed in Christ.

But now natural theology would follow quite another method and place one in the same relation to the objects of religion that one occupies in relation to those of science. One would seek as objective an attitude as possible. But this leaves all that is distinctly valuable in the Christian religion, all that has redemptive power, out of consideration. This method does for natural science, because its data are more or less objective and open to all. But the data of theology are so much richer, so much more subjective and personal, that the ordinary categories of science are not adequate to it at all. The method of natural science misses the material of theology.

Traub expresses more clearly than Ritschl himself the position of the latter, when he says that science as science has to do with truth apart from its objective applicability. In that sense theology can lay claim to be science. But the reality with which it deals is of the highest worth, and can be experienced only by those who know its worth for them. Personal conviction is necessary to attain its

⁸ *J. R.*, p. 606.

truth, and to take this attitude is to follow a method adequate to the object. On this account our interest in truth is not lessened, but the more valuable the material, the greater is the necessity for an impartial ascertaining of its reality.⁹ This is the real meaning of Ritschl when he calls religious knowledge "interested knowledge," and declares that the "scientific worker must so far keep this degree of interest in sight as to conserve all those characteristics of the conception of God which render possible the trust described above." And yet Ritschl affirms again that "theology" as a science, "is disinterested cognition." We have already seen that Ritschl excludes the metaphysical content and method from theology. We now see why he excludes the natural-science method, and will not allow theology to become the general science of religion.

II

It is from the point of view already taken that we can best approach Ritschl's philosophical statement concerning the nature of religious knowledge and its differentiation from scientific knowledge. Ritschl says that the Christian theologian may make a regulative use of other religions. When the Christian religion is compared with other religions and its knowledge with the knowledge of other religions, one finds that all religious knowledge is of a kind, and that it differs from scientific knowledge. Every religion may be regarded as a revelation. All religious knowledge is that in which we are profoundly interested and satisfies practical needs. It is knowledge of redemption. A peculiar attitude on the part of the recipient is always necessary to share this knowledge.

In every religion what is sought with the help of supernatural spiritual powers, reverenced by man, is a solution of the contradiction in which man finds himself as both a part of the world of nature and a spiritual personality claiming to dominate nature. For in the former rôle he is part of nature, dependent upon her, subject to and confined by other things; but as a spirit he is moved by an impulse to maintain his independence against it. In this juncture religion springs up as faith in a superhuman spiritual power, by whose help the power which man possesses of himself is in some way supplanted and elevated into a unity of its own kind, which is a match for the pressure of the natural world.¹⁰

It is this intensely personal character of religious knowledge which

⁹ *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, January, 1903.

¹⁰ *J. R.*, secs. 27-30; for following discussion and quotations.

differentiates it from the more disinterested and scientific knowledge. Indeed, Ritschl tells us that

religious and theoretical knowledge are different functions of the human spirit, which, while they deal with the same objects, are not even partially coincident, but wholly diverge.

In order to bring out the characteristic of religious knowledge, let us first present Ritschl's view of scientific knowledge.

Scientific knowledge includes the knowledge of the natural sciences. Ritschl calls it theoretic, scientific, or even philosophic knowledge. Philosophic knowledge then, for Ritschl, is scientific knowledge. Or, if they differ at all, philosophic knowledge is the more general form of scientific knowledge. Philosophic knowledge is theoretic knowledge, and does not include the knowledge that comes from religion. To determine the difference between scientific and religious knowledge,

it is necessary to recall the twofold manner in which the mind further appropriates the sensations aroused within it. The sensations are determined according to their value for the self by the feeling of pleasure and pain. In the feeling of pleasure and pain, the self decides whether a sensation which touches the feeling of self serves to heighten or depress it. On the other hand, through the idea the sensation is judged according to its cause, the nature of the latter, and its connection with other causes; and by means of observation, etc., the knowledge of things thus gained is extended till it becomes scientific. . . . Scientific knowledge seeks to discover the laws of nature and spirit through observation, and is based on the presumption that both the observations and their arrangement are carried out according to the ascertained laws of human cognition.

Scientific knowledge, then, deals with the content of sensations as these are united together in the association of ideas, with these ideas as they are brought under the categories of causation, etc., to form an objective world, and with the whole scientific ordering and arrangement of the objective world. By the process of induction, by observation and experiment, science aims to bring the whole world under a general law. If one wished to be convinced of the truth of a scientific statement, one would examine the processes by which the statement had been made. One would see that the observations had been carefully and accurately made, and that every step in the process was in accordance with the ascertained laws of thought. Or, to know a fact for science is to articulate it in the causal process.

This is the proof for theoretic knowledge. Of course, in the last analysis it rests upon our faith in the processes of cognition, but, in general, science does not take account of this fundamental presupposition.

Now, this scientific knowledge is, when contrasted with religious knowledge, what we may term "disinterested knowledge." But certainly we have some interest in the matter, or we would not carry on the process of cognition at all.

It must not be forgotten that all continuous cognition of things which excite sensation is not only accompanied, but is likewise guided, by feeling. For, in so far as attention is necessary to attain the end of knowledge, will, as representing the desire for accurate cognition, comes in between; the proximate cause of will, however, is feeling, as expressing the consciousness that a thing or activity is worth desiring, or that something ought to be put away. Value-judgments, therefore, are determinative in all connected knowledge of the world, even when carried out in the most objective fashion. . . . Without interest we do not trouble ourselves about anything.

What we may, therefore, call concomitant value-judgments are "operative and necessary in all theoretical cognition." And especially is this true "in prolonged technical observation and combination, where attention is concentrated for a long period of time." Even scientific knowledge is interested knowledge in the sense that it arises because we think it is valuable to construct it; because, without this originating and accompanying feeling of value for us, we would never waste the necessary energy to create it. Ritschl even seems to admit that scientific knowledge grows to supply a practical need, and that it calls up a certain amount of pleasure and pain in so far as it succeeds or fails. It is only then in contrast with the more personal and practical character of religious knowledge that we can call the latter disinterested knowledge.

It is because scientific knowledge advances by experience and observation that it cannot comprehend the world as a whole. There is always new material; and its work is never complete. It can, to be sure, discover the general laws of nature and spirit, and philosophic knowledge holds before it the ambition to comprehend the world as a whole. At one time Ritschl seems to concede that philosophy might do this, and in that case would have a common object with religion; but, in general, he sees in this desire of philosophy something in addition to "disinterested science" and the work of

an "intuitive imagination." This is a religious impulse and should have no place in scientific knowledge.

While philosophy or scientific knowledge cannot comprehend the world as a whole, it has no right to deny this power to religious faith. In fact, science to attain its ideal as knowledge, must acknowledge the Christian conception of God.

For knowledge has laid on it the task of comprehending the coexistence of the natural and spiritual life. If so, nothing remains but to accept the Christian idea of God, and that, too, as an indispensable truth, in order that we find both the ground and law of the real world in that creative will which includes as the final end of the world the destination of mankind for the kingdom of God.

If now we turn to religious knowledge, we see that it arises out of the attitude which the self takes to the sensations, or out of the feelings of value which the presented object excites in the self.

The ego decides in a feeling of pleasure and pain whether the sensation which touches the feeling of self serves to heighten or to depress it.

These judgments of the self concerning the value of the sensation to arouse pleasure or pain, to advance or hinder its purposes, may be called independent value-judgments, in contrast with the accompanying value-judgments which go along with every process of cognition.

Independent value-judgments are all perceptions of moral ends or hindrances, in so far as they excite moral pleasure or pain, or, it may be, set in motion the will to appropriate what is good or repel the opposite.

Of these independent value-judgments there are two classes, namely, moral and religious value-judgments. Religious judgments cannot be traced back to the condition which marks the knowledge belonging to moral will, for there exists religion which goes on without any relation whatever to the moral conduct of life. Religious knowledge moves in independent value-judgments, which relate to man's attitude to the world and call forth feelings of pleasure or pain, in which man either enjoys dominion over the world, vouchsafed him by God, or feels grievously the lack of God's help to that end. . . . In Christianity religious knowledge consists in independent value-judgments, inasmuch as it deals with the relation between the blessedness which is assured by God and sought by man, and the whole of the world which God has created and rules in harmony with his final end.

In terms of the value-judgment Ritschl expresses all that was

brought out in the previous section concerning the practical and personal character of religious knowledge. All religious knowledge runs in value-judgments. One knows the nature of God and Christ in their worth for us, in their saving activity in creating our blessedness. "Only in their saving worth for us are we able to know rightly God, Christ, the communion of believers, our conversion and regeneration." Even sin is known as the measure of its unworth as presented in the light of the blessedness of the kingdom of God. This was the position of Luther when he taught that God and faith are inseparable correlates.

Knowledge of God can be demonstrated as religious knowledge only when he is conceived of as securing to the believer a position in the world which more than counterbalances his restrictions.

If we ask after the psychological formation of religious ideas, Ritschl answers that they are the work of the intuitive imagination. The religious representations of God and the world present themselves as an object of the perceiving imagination (*anschauenden Phantasie*). But the idea of God is no accidental or lawless work of the imagination, nor can we speak of it as "mere imagination;" but the religious view of God and the world spring from the practical law of the human spirit. The certainty of religious truth is not established by an examination of the processes of cognition—that is, by logical proof—but by the assurance of the feeling, willing side of the self. It is by the function of the objects of religion, by the fact that it assures our blessedness, that we are certain of its reality. As in the case of scientific reasoning the certainty lodges finally in the intellectual processes themselves, so here the certainty is found in the feeling-willing side of our nature.

But religious knowledge conveys a knowledge of reality just as truly as scientific knowledge does. The method of attainment is different, and each is suited to attain genuine knowledge of the reality in question. Ritschl uses value-judgments interchangeably with faith. And he says that Luther

seems to reduce the religious character of the knowledge of God to the arbitrary feelings of the subject, and we seem to be furnished with the corroboration that a man's God varies as his faith. But Luther distinguishes between two kinds of faith, that which is sincere and that which is infected with illusions. If he

reduced everything to arbitrary caprice, he would not make this distinction, which depends on whether one takes, or does not take, the right way of knowledge to God, namely, through Christ. For faith which is genuine and sincere can be experienced only in response to the true revelation of God.

When one asks concerning the relation of scientific knowledge to religious knowledge, Ritschl replies that, while scientific knowledge can never deal with the world as a whole, it is the very nature of religious knowledge to deal with the world as a whole. For it is the world-whole from which man has been redeemed and over which he is preserved by God. Then, too, science has to accept the Christian ideal of God if it is to attain its goal. But we may go even farther than this; we see the necessity of, and even prove, or at least postulate, the Christian idea of God apart from the religious judgments of value. Kant did this in his moral argument for the existence of God. One can scarcely say that this proof, since it rests on the difference in value between nature and spirit, rests on scientific or philosophical knowledge, but rather upon moral value-judgments. Theological or religious knowledge is scientific, because it follows a method adequate to its object, and because it furnishes a view of the world which science must accept.

III

Wendland claims that in the first edition of his work Ritschl made the difference between religious and world-knowledge lie in the different objects of each.¹¹ Religion relates to the world as a whole, and philosophic knowledge seeks to discover the general laws of nature and spirit. But in his later edition Ritschl contradicts this statement, for he tells us that metaphysics gives us very elementary knowledge, and the difference now is to be found in the functions of the subject. To explain this two-fold function of the ego, Ritschl introduces his value-judgments. Pfleiderer also presses this criticism and says that in the two editions of Ritschl we have a clear contradiction.¹² In the first edition Ritschl claims that if philosophy could view the world as a whole, it would clash with religion. In the last edition he admits that it may; but even here he mixes the two positions and is inconsistent. We are told that phil-

¹¹ *Albrecht Ritschl und seine Schüler*, chap. 2.

¹² *Ritschl'sche Theologie*, chap. 2.

osophy can give a view of the world as a whole, and again that this attempt on the part of philosophy comes from the religious impulse and signifies an abandonment of the scientific method.

Wendland has been unable to see that Ritschl identifies philosophic knowledge with scientific, and differentiates both from the *a priori* and elementary knowledge of metaphysics.

The philosophic knowledge of nature and spirit surpasses in worth metaphysical knowledge, which investigates both magnitudes only under the conception of things in general, therefore superficially.¹³

One may reject Ritschl's view of metaphysics. One may claim that metaphysics does not even give a world-ground, or one may hold that it gives even more; but since Ritschl defines it as he does, and excludes it from theology because the latter has a richer content, it is not fair to say that by the exclusion of metaphysics he has shut out reality. Kaftan tells us¹⁴ that the term "metaphysics" is ambiguous. If one understands by its use in theology an attempt to make intelligible the objects of faith by cosmological speculation, then he would reject it. But if one means that faith has not to do with mere subjective conditions of consciousness, but with eternal supersensual realities which actually condition and give a true understanding of all reality, then he agrees with him.

In regard to the second criticism of Wendland also urged by Pfleiderer, we answer that it is only partially correct. The position that philosophy cannot give a world-whole is the general position of Ritschl throughout the last edition, while the concept of worth of which the value-judgment is only a fuller expression is prominent in his first edition. It is true that in his last edition Ritschl does concede that philosophy aims to know the world as a whole; but when he comes into closer relation with his problem, his position is precisely that of his first edition; and on this matter Reischle, a pupil of Ritschl, tells us¹⁵ that he never changed his view. He always held that the honor belonged to Christianity to present a view of the world as a whole.

Ritschl did not give to philosophy the knowledge that results

¹³ *Theologie und Metaphysik*, sec. 1.

¹⁴ *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 1893.

¹⁵ *Welturteile und Glaubensurteile*.

from value-judgment. It is for this reason that he would scarcely concede to it the right to know the world as a whole. In the world of science, as Ritschl understood it, there would be no place for morality or freedom. Moreover, science or philosophy can never give a final or exhaustive statement of reality, because experience is still in progress. But philosophy today would claim that it is just its task to make some statement concerning the world as a whole, because the individual has to act with reference to the world-whole.

While Ritschl does not use the term "value-judgment" in his first edition, Reischle shows very clearly that the position he takes there is in harmony with that of his later work. In the first edition he claims that religious and world-knowledge represent "opposed activities of the human spirit." In the second edition he says "different functions of the spirit." He tells us also that science and religion attain their results by different methods—the one by observation and experiment, while the other is practical and its ideas are the work of the imagination. Moreover, he gives the same statement of the origin of religion. It arises out of the conflict of man as a part of nature, and yet as a spirit opposing himself to nature. The whole idea, then, of value is present in the first edition, though the term "value-judgment" is not used.

Pfleiderer,¹⁶ Schoen,¹⁷ and Traub¹⁸ point out that in the first edition of his work Ritschl concluded his examination of Kant's moral proof with this judgment: "This acceptance of the idea of God is not an act of practical faith, but an idea of theoretical reason." In the last edition he follows much the same argument; he chides Kant because he fails to estimate the practical reason at its proper worth, and claims that "if exertion of the moral will is a reality, then the practical reason is a branch of theoretical cognition;" and he points out that Kant's failure was in the fact that "for him sensibility was a characteristic mark of reality." Yet he concludes his argument with these words: "The assumption of the idea of God is, as Kant remarks, practical faith, and not an act of theoretical knowledge." In the first edition Ritschl thought that theoretic

¹⁶ *Ritschl'sche Theologie*, chap. 2.

¹⁷ *Origines historiques de la theologie de Ritschl*.

¹⁸ *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 1894.

reason must establish the existence of God in order that theology may be scientific, while in the last edition theology is a science because it follows a method adequate to its means.

Pfleiderer affirms that in his last edition Ritschl claims that the idea of God cannot be proved outside of religious faith. But Ritschl says:

This argument is based upon necessary data of the spiritual life of man, which is outside of the religious view of the world, and must be explained either by recognizing the Christian idea of God or not at all.

Ritschl denies, then, that theoretic reason can prove the existence of God, but he adds that moral value-judgments must postulate his existence. Ritschl does not make a clear discrimination between what morality demands and what religious faith affirms on this point. Again, Ritschl does not seem to have made clear to himself whether moral value-judgments can be included in the theoretic reason or not. In the first edition he gave this to the theoretic reason and recognized the proof as established by scientific knowledge, while in the last edition he closes with the recognition that such a process of reasoning is a value-judgment. The proof is demonstrative in either case; it is merely a question of method, and it shows conclusively that Ritschl never doubted the reality of the object which the value-judgment affirmed. In general, religious knowledge, as knowledge which runs in value-judgments, is contrasted with scientific, which is mechanical and causal; and the moral value-judgments are left out of consideration. Here, though he mixes at times the moral value-judgments with the religious judgments of faith, still the inference is that the existence of God is a postulate of the moral life and does not have to support itself on revelation. The exact relation between moral and religious value-judgments is not quite clear. Does Ritschl mean to affirm that morality solves the problem of religion?

Traub thinks that Ritschl's statements in his last edition regarding the moral argument are not consistent with his propositions that religious knowledge "runs in value-judgments." For when theoretic science recognizes the moral consciousness as a reality, it has in mind the psychological activity, while Ritschl includes its valuation. With the recognition of the former there might still go the judgment

that its ideals are illusions. When you affirm them as a reality, your judgment is a practical valuation. The whole view that nature is a means for spirit is a value-judgment.

In his doctrine of the personality of God, where Ritschl attempts to prove that the idea of personality and of the Absolute are not contradictory, Pfleiderer, Traub, and Ecke find a speculative task which is inconsistent with the practical character of religious knowledge. The criticism is in part just. Ritschl shows the influence of Lotze's philosophy, and indulges in speculations which have no place in dogmatics. Yet apologetics must treat some of these questions. And when the proposition that religious knowledge runs in value-judgments is not interpreted too narrowly; when it is understood that a proposition does not rest upon an immediate feeling, but that it rests finally on the ground of the conviction of the worth of the truth for our personal life, some of these so-called speculative discussions will then ground themselves indirectly on value-judgments.

Ritschl's doctrine of value-judgments has led to much criticism and discussion by his critics and disciples. The former have charged him with reducing religion to mere subjectivity and with erecting an irreconcilable dualism in the human mind. Luthardt says¹⁹ that for Ritschl religion does not deal with existences, but with values. The value-judgment is severed from existence and left hanging in the air. He does not realize that the significance of the fact must have its foundation in the fact itself.

Stählin thinks²⁰ that if Ritschl "meant by value-judgments" that the knowledge which has no value relative to salvation is not to be regarded as religious, and that much which the scholastics regarded as important is to be excluded, then the church will probably raise no objection to him. But this is not his meaning. For him there is no deity of Christ objectively considered. "If religious knowledge consists in value-judgments, it lacks objectivity."

Orr admits²¹ that religion has its "roots deep in the immediate consciousness of God;" that it has its own modes of "apprehension

¹⁹ *Zeitschrift für kirchliche Wissenschaft und kirchliches Leben*, 1881.

²⁰ *Kant, Lotze, und Ritschl*.

²¹ *The Ritschlian Theology*, chap. 8.

and expression;" that there is a "strong practical tendency in religion;" that its "modes of representation are figurative and pictorial;" and that this element of truth is expressed in Ritschl's view. But Ritschl's statement lands us in subjectivity, and presents a dualism in the human mind.

Pfleiderer finds²² an element of truth in Ritschl's statement which has been recognized since Schleiermacher, but he detects also two great errors. For, according to Ritschl, the feeling of worth not only forms the motive of investigation, but actually dictates the result. The first is true, but the latter is absolutely fatal to any scientific work. Then, again, according to Ritschl's own statement, religious knowledge ought not to run in value-judgments alone. For he distinctly states that "the two functions of spirit mentioned are always in operation simultaneously, and always also in some degree mutually related, even though it be in the inverse ratio of prominence." If theoretic judgments are accompanied by value-judgments, then the latter are, or ought to be, accompanied by the former. But Ritschl says that religious knowledge runs in independent value-judgments. Then they are purely subjective and have not the slightest guarantee for the objective worth of their knowledge. Ritschl comes to the position of Lange, who would tell us that religious ideas are practically useful and worthful, but are groundless imaginations. But religious ideas can be worthful only when one is convinced of their truth.

Wendland says²³ that no one will deny that religious knowledge rests on the inner experience of the pious soul, and that its religious ideas have peculiar interest for the religious subject. But the term "value-judgment" is not a proper designation of the character of religious knowledge.

Kattenbusch affirms²⁴ that Ritschl never meant that we can have a system of pure value-judgments in differentiation from judgments of existence. Ritschl means that dogmatics as a science must not pass beyond the knowledge which is given in value-judgments. He does not affirm that the realities are not in existence apart from

²² See reference, footnote, p. 423.

²³ *Albrecht Ritschl und seine Schüler.*

²⁴ *Theologische Litteraturzeitung*, 1882.

value-judgments, but that they are not in existence for us. Ritschl's proposition that what we know of God comes from his operations upon us is made without reference to the difference between value and theoretic judgments.

Garvie considers²⁵ that Ritschl meant the value-judgment to be as true as a scientific judgment. He says that when Dr. Denney affirms that Jesus has, according to Ritschl, for the religious consciousness the religious value of God, but has for the scientific knowledge the common real value of man, and that it is only the subjective, pious estimate of the Christian which gives him the value of God, he is guilty of a double misconception. For Ritschl holds that the scientific consciousness cannot affirm or deny anything about the divinity of Christ. The truth is not in the realm of scientific consciousness, and cannot be reached by its methods. Ritschl would also affirm that the considerations of science do not correspond with truth more closely than the estimate of the pious Christian.

Traub contends²⁶ that Pfleiderer has not interpreted Ritschl correctly. For the latter never claims that the interest of the investigator should determine the result. Ritschl merely means that knowledge arises because of a feeling of its worth, and he makes this clear when he tells us that this feeling is necessary to arouse and sustain attention. He distinctly points out that the validity of scientific knowledge is to be assured by careful observation and by investigation according to the "ascertained laws of human cognition." Further, Traub urges that those who charge Ritschl with subjectivity ought to realize the significance of the charge. For Ritschl knew as well as his critics that to bring the actual reality of the object of religion in question meant the death of all religion. The question is one of method, and Ritschl claims that one can be certain of the objective reality only in the religious experience. The facts of salvation prove themselves as real facts to him who experiences them in his inner life. Ritschl means by his term "value-judgment" that the certainty of faith is not a theoretical conclusion, but a personal conviction. If one calls this Feuerbachianism, then he bases his assertion on the ungrounded assumption that only theoretical knowledge is real.

²⁵ *The Ritschlian Theology.*

²⁶ See reference, footnote, p. 434.

In the doctrine of the value-judgment Ritschl and his school mean to give philosophical expression to the personal and practical character of religious knowledge. Herrmann, on the philosophical basis of Kant, affirms²⁷ the dignity of man and the practical character of all knowledge. He is the first to apply the term "value-judgment" to religious knowledge, which, he holds, has a postulate nature and rests on the basis of the moral feeling of worth. The method by which it is obtained is not that of scientific knowledge, but it is none the less knowledge of reality.

The first use of this term by Ritschl was in his criticism of the work of Kaftan.²⁸ The latter starts out with the twofold activity of consciousness, which both presents an object and takes an attitude to it. From this we have the two classes of judgments, one of which deals with the content and expresses a fact, and so makes up the sum of our scientific knowledge; and the other deals with the attitude and is a judgment of value. "Value-judgments express our position to the world, and they add nothing more to the facts on which they relate themselves than what they mean for us." Of these value-judgments there are three kinds: the natural, the moral, and the æsthetic. Religious knowledge rests on the natural value-judgments, since it seeks to preserve the Supreme Good. Religious judgments are judgments of existence based on value-judgments. We have, then, two classes of theoretical judgments, one class of which depends for its validity on observation and the laws of thought, and the other is practically conditioned.

Lipsius²⁹ and Scheibe³⁰ hold positions similar to that of Kaftan. According to both, theoretic judgments may not only be based on scientific observation, but they may assert the existence of a fact on the basis of some practical necessity. That is, theoretical judgments may rest on value-judgments. They distinguish between accidental and necessary value-judgments, and define the latter as those which stand in inseparable connection with the self-certainty of our personal existence. Religion rests on the basis of necessary value-judgments and gives a knowledge of objective reality.

²⁷ *Die Religion in Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit.*

²⁸ *Das Wesen der christlichen Religion.*

²⁹ *Philosophie und Religion*, 1885.

³⁰ *Die Bedeutung der Werturteile für das religiöse Erkennen.*

Otto Ritschl,³¹ in defending the thesis of his father, starts out from the unity of consciousness, which means that no function of the soul can be carried on in complete isolation from the other activities. There must be in every conscious act a certain element of feeling, willing, and ideation. But scientific knowledge demands the isolation of feeling and willing from the intellectual processes as far as possible. This abstraction is obtained by long and careful education, and is never complete, since most men, women especially, and all children think in value-judgments; that is, their ideas are inseparably united with feeling and desire. The element of feeling and willing is present in all religious knowledge, so that one can never sever the religious emotion or the feeling of personal interest from the intellectual element in religious knowledge. But such value-judgments give objective reality and meet the needs of practical life. The presence or absence of an experience of worth in the act of judging has nothing to do with the reality of the object; so that we cannot oppose existential to value-judgments as if the former alone gave us reality. Religious knowledge is not, as Kaftan affirms, based on value-judgments, but it runs in value-judgments. It is personal conviction and must always keep this form.

Reischle in his *Werturteile und Glaubensurteile* gives us the most satisfactory and thorough treatment of this subject in the Ritschlian school, and virtually defends the position of his master. He affirms that worth means a relation, not to the activity of ideation, but to the feeling-willing self. A certain amount of reflection is necessary to pass a value-judgment. The immediate feeling of pain or pleasure may deceive us. The worth of an object is the property of an object to guarantee satisfaction through its existence directly or indirectly to my whole feeling-willing self. There are certain value-judgments, such as the æsthetic, intellectual, moral, and religious, which rest on an ideal valid for the human spirit and can claim universal validity. Inasmuch as the chief aim of knowledge is to decide by careful observation and by attention to the laws of thought concerning the truth or falsity of a matter, the intellectual value-judgment is generally overlooked; and yet all judgments of knowledge are accompanied by a feeling of the worth of knowledge which accompanies the process

³¹ *Ueber Werturteile.*

of knowing and arouses and sustains attention. This is what Ritschl called an accompanying value-judgment; but it is more correct to say that it is an accompanying feeling of value, which only under certain conditions comes to expression as a value-judgment, and in that case as an independent value-judgment.

If we define a value-judgment according to the ordinary use of language, then we must affirm it to be a judgment in which "worth is predicated of any object fixed in presentation." This definition is imperfect, since it both includes many degenerate value-judgments and excludes the moral and intellectual postulates which ought to be regarded as value-judgments. Then, too, the object may not present a reality apart from the presenting consciousness. In this sense the propositions of faith cannot be called value-judgments, for they can have significance only when the spiritual magnitude affirmed by them is a reality; and the Ritschlian school has always held that the judgments of faith are *Seinsurtheile*. Nor is it wise to say that the propositions of faith are theoretic judgments based on value-judgments, as Kaftan and Lipsius; for by theoretic judgments one understands those judgments which rest on the necessity of perception and the laws of thought. The inner experience which is at the basis of religious knowledge is not a judgment of value, but a feeling of value. From a psychological point of view, then, we might define a value-judgment as a judgment brought about on the ground of personal appreciation or valuation. This excludes all judgments which rest on mere custom or authority. Otto Ritschl is wrong when he defines value-judgments as those immediately connected with feelings of worth, since all early judgments are so connected; but value-judgments include only those which grow up on the ground of personal valuation. From this definition we might say that religious knowledge consists or runs in value-judgments, for even the propositions which rest on authority are indirectly grounded in the "value" which the individual ascribes to the person or church.

From a more critical point of view we may define a value-judgment as a judgment whose validity does not rest on the necessity of perception and of logical thinking, but on the position of the feeling-willing self to the object of presentation. From this view we can

see that children do not think in value-judgments, as Otto Ritschl maintained, since the validity of their judgment is grounded in perception and in the laws of thought. Albrecht Ritschl did not clearly distinguish between the psychological and this critical point of view; for though all activity of knowledge is guided by a feeling of worth, still this does not always come to expression as a value-judgment. From this definition Ritschl was right when he held that knowledge runs, or consists in, value-judgments.

The religious propositions of faith are judgments, the validity of which cannot be made certain on grounds of perception and the laws of thought, but only on the ground of living conviction in the believed truth for the personal life.

Thus, though Reischle concedes to the critics of his master the ambiguity of the term "value-judgment," he yet defends the position which means to affirm the personal and practical character of religious knowledge. His agreement with Ritschl goes farther when he denies the postulate character of these judgments, but virtually identifies them with faith, since they are the correlate of the revelation of God as it impresses us in the person of Jesus Christ. He is sure that metaphysics cannot give more than a unitary world-ground, and therefore has nothing to make possible the personal trust of supreme importance to religion. He does not think that metaphysics can even give such a world-ground, and falls back upon the position of Kant.

IV

In view of Ritschl's whole teaching and of the position of his disciples, no unbiased historical student will judge that Ritschl for a moment meant to deny the reality of the object of religion. We have seen already that Ritschl held that one could give a historical estimate of Jesus only when one exercised faith in him. He makes the value-judgment virtually equivalent to faith, and it has as its correlate the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. This, Ritschl says, saves Luther's position from subjectivity. All this shows that Ritschl's term "value-judgment" is an attempt to express in philosophical language the personal character of religious knowledge. The moral proof for God's existence is in one edition called the theoretic proof, and in another a practical proof. It is not then a question of fact,

but a question of how we attain the knowledge of fact. His reply to materialism and pantheism, and his whole seriousness and earnestness, forbid the student to believe that Ritschl ever doubted the reality of the object of religion. Ritschl emphatically denies the position of Feuerbach.

The Hegelians made the mistake of supposing that the theoretical is not merely the most valuable function of the spirit, but likewise the function which has to take up the problem of religion and solve it.³²

Now, Feuerbach pointed out that in religion the chief stress falls upon "the needs and wishes of the human heart." In this Feuerbach is correct, but he also held the Hegelian illusion concerning theoretical knowledge, and so claimed that religion represented an individual and egoistic interest, and was "a delusion in regard to its object" and was "worthless as knowledge." Ritschl denies the egoism which is here affirmed, and claims that the needs, feelings, and values of the human spirit may be as universal in their nature as the laws of thought, and may convey as true a revelation of reality. In the light of this it is mere dogmatism to assert that Ritschl held to the position of Feuerbach.

But the critic may say that Ritschl did not see the logical issue of his position. Accordingly, we raise the question: Does Ritschl's philosophic position concerning the nature of religious knowledge lead logically to a denial of the reality of the object of that knowledge? To answer this question it may be wise to discover the genesis of his statement and to relate this to his metaphysical position. The fact that we have discussed the nature of religious knowledge under his theological presuppositions shows that we hold that Ritschl's view here has a religious rather than a metaphysical source. As a Christian, and as a student of religion, Ritschl was led to affirm the peculiar nature of religious knowledge. But at the same time his form of statement was without doubt influenced by the position of Lotze and by the work of Kaftan.

In his psychology³³ Lotze teaches us that in every activity of the soul the whole soul is active.

³² *J. R.*, sec. 28.

³³ For what follows see *Outlines of Psychology*, chap. 6; *Outlines of Metaphysics*, secs. 93-97; *Philosophy of Religion*, secs. 65-70; *Microcosmos*, Vol. I, Book II, chap. 5; Book V, chap. 5.

In ideation the soul is active because it cannot respond to a definite excitation save by a definite form of expression. . . . It is an original peculiarity of the mind that it not only presents changes to itself, but becomes aware of their value in terms of pleasure and pain. . . . No mental presentation is completely indifferent, and the pleasure and pain attached to it escapes our attention only because in educated life the meaning and the significance which the impressions have for our purposes in life has become more important to us than the consideration of the impression itself.

The recognition of the value of a thing is bound up with the feeling of pleasure or pain. The value of a thing is in its power to produce pleasure or pain in a spiritual being. There can be no worth or unworth in a thing-in-itself.

An idea of an object possessing worth which does not show its worth for someone by its capacity to produce pleasure or pain shoots beyond the mark.

If we now turn from the psychology of worth to its evaluation, Lotze informs us that the true beginning of metaphysics lies in ethics. "We are to seek in that which should be, the ground of that which is." But that which should be is the Highest-Good-personal. The Moral Being capable of feeling pleasure and pain with finite moral beings of like capacity is what should be, and what is, as real. The highest good consists in blessedness, in well-being. Things exist to produce values. It is because there are moral beings with feeling, capable of pleasure or pain, that there can be an obligatory moral law. Drop out the element of feeling in God and man, and consider them as pure intellect and volition, and it is difficult to find a place for moral obligation. This does not mean that pleasure is the moral ideal. There is no such thing as pleasure in general, just as there is no color in general. One cannot feel without "feeling in a particular way, and the specific feeling is in every case rather the immediate individual transference into the language of sensibility of the peculiar worth to this peculiar case of excitation." Pleasure is rather the light in which existing reality shows forth all "its objective essence and beauty."

In our own feelings for the value of things and their relation our reason possesses as genuine a revelation as, in the principle of logical investigation, it has an indispensable instrument of experience. . . . Every real cause of pleasure is indeed only recognition and enjoyment of a specific worth which has its own occasioning cause different from the cause of every other pleasure. There

is an ideal according to which we may measure worths. Supreme pleasure is in the satisfaction of conscience itself. Pleasure in the agreement of any individual pleasure and this supreme legislation is a standard exempt from fluctuation. . . . That which corresponds to a momentary and accidental condition of some individual peculiarity of the mind which it affects is of less worth, and that is of more worth which harmonizes with the general and normal features for organization, by which the mind is fitted for the fulfilment of its destiny. That would be of supreme worth which caused satisfaction to an ideal mind in its normal condition, a mind which had been purified from all tendency to divert from its proper path of development.

This, in brief, is what Lotze teaches concerning values, and it is the key to his whole philosophical system. The whole world of forms, the whole mechanism of nature, exists for the creation of values. Values, then, are not purely subjective or arbitrary, for Lotze. The desires of men as well as thought may contain a universal element and possess objectivity in the sense of universality. Since man is a part of reality, he neither thinks nor values in a purely subjective way. Our valuation conforms to a perfect valuation as our knowledge conforms to a perfect knowledge. In both we have an interpretation of reality. It is not difficult to discover the influence of Lotze upon the philosophical statement of Ritschl. For Ritschl tells us that ideation is accompanied by feeling and willing, and that the worth of an object is in its capacity to arouse pleasure and pain. For him, too, the highest good is blessedness. Our valuation gives us a true valuation of reality. Values are not purely arbitrary, but feeling as well as thought may possess a universal element. If theoretic knowledge is a knowledge of reality, then valuation is also an interpretation of reality. Unless one can show that Ritschl's metaphysical position is solipsism, he cannot charge him with subjectivity. But that is not the case, for we have seen that he accepts the ontology of Lotze. Let us take the example so often urged against Ritschl, namely, the divinity of Christ. This is a value-judgment. Ritschl tells us that the divinity of Christ expresses the value of Christ for us. It represents the power of Christ to secure our blessedness. The man who has not experienced this blessedness which Christ gives can pass no valuation on him. He is in the position of a blind man before a work of art. But is the valuation of the Christian correct? The more perfect the Christian, the more perfect is his

valuation. God's valuation is the perfect one. He knows Jesus as he is in himself—that is, as he is for God—and we know him as he is for us. We have a true, but not a complete, knowledge or valuation of reality.

But while Ritschl's philosophical statement, taken as a whole, does not lead to subjectivity, yet the term "value-judgment" itself is indefinite and unclear. Ritschl's first statement of the value-judgment was made in a review of Kaftan's work. We have already pointed out Kaftan's position. The mind both presents an object and values it, and from this twofold activity he derives the two forms of judgment. In criticism Ritschl says that every theoretic judgment contains in itself a value-judgment. The fact that we give attentive observation shows the action of the will, which in its turn is influenced by feeling. Ritschl weakens the dualism of Kaftan. In both cases we are moved by valuation, but in the one case it is a direct valuation of a thing for our lives, and in the other it is a valuation of the knowledge itself through which we present the fact of the thing. This position is virtually taken up in the third edition of his large work, and a statement of it has already been given. There is some ground for the criticism of Pfleiderer that, if theoretical judgments are accompanied by value-judgments, then, according to Ritschl's position that both activities are always present, value-judgments are accompanied by theoretic judgments. There must be the ideational content in the religious judgment. It is in this way that Otto Ritschl defends his father's thesis. He tells us that all experience begins in value-judgments. But as the content side is developed, the feeling and will element drop out. In this case science and theology are alike. They both as sciences must move in theoretical judgments. And theology can run in value-judgments only so long as it is crude, naïve, and unscientific. This is the logical issue of Otto Ritschl's position. Reischle's position is closer to the real meaning of Ritschl. It is the accompanying feeling of value which Ritschl has in mind when he speaks of accompanying value-judgments.

In every concrete experience there are, as Ritschl claims, both the content-phase and the value-phase. And the psychology of Ritschl is perfectly correct, when he says that one cannot have a fact and then

value it, or that one cannot know God apart from his value for us. The content cannot be presented irrespective of any attitude on the part of the subject. And the value of an object is not a secondary or derived thing, but every content falls within the process of valuation. We may abstract the content side of experience and develop this as a means of controlling further experiences. This is the world of science. We may abstract the side of valuation and arrange attitudes or values and develop a world of ends, and this gives us a system of morals. This, too, is objectively real, for it helps us to control further experiences. But the reality is just the whole experience with its content and value. It is just the whole world of means and ends with their interrelations. To charge Ritschl with subjectivity is to assume that the abstract world of science is the whole reality. And the logical issue of this is materialism.

Moreover, Ritschl is to be recommended in that he emphasizes the intensely personal and practical character of religious knowledge. Religious knowledge is the knowledge that accrues to faith, and it moves in the realm of personal conviction. The Christian view of the world is a reasonable faith, but it is a faith and can never be demonstrated in such a way as to compel universal recognition. Metaphysics does not prove God, and it does not give us freedom or immortality. When one builds on it, he builds not on the solid rock whereon Christ stood, but on the sand which cannot withstand the storms. It was Ritschl's profound spiritual insight which led him to reject so unsafe a foundation. Science and philosophy have rejected metaphysics, as that term has been understood, and it was Ristchl's merit that he demanded for theology that it stand on its own basis of divine revelation, and not on the tottering foundation of metaphysics. Metaphysics is not to give reality. God must be experienced. The richer one makes one's own life, the better can one interpret reality. Knowledge grows out of experience, and knowledge of God and faith in immortality grow out of an experience of the revelation of God in one's own soul mediated through the inner life of Jesus Christ. Knowledge cannot take the place of faith, thought the place of loving service, or metaphysics the place of religion. Ritschl tells us that, to know God, we must surrender our lives to the spirit of Jesus and find our vocation within his kingdom.

In all this Ritschl is in harmony with the teaching of Jesus, Paul, and Luther, and with the psychological thought and practical needs of today. Christianity by its functions in the individual life and in society must prove both its right to be, and to be what it claims.

But Ritschl does not seem to see clearly and state plainly the practical and functional character of all knowledge. Over against speculative idealism he affirms the practical character of religious knowledge, but he never completely emancipates himself from the speculative ideal, he never accepts the functional character of thought in experience. There are not two criterions of knowledge. The one test of reality is its power to appeal to the feelings, and to further or hinder the purposes of the will. Ritschl seems to view thought apart from its origin and function in experience. We are to test reality for theoretic thought by asking if it conforms to the forms of perception and the categories of thought. But just how did we come to have these forms and categories, and why do we rely upon them? They have arisen as means of reaction under practical needs for the preservation of life. There is even no mere mechanical association of ideas. The forms of perception and the categories of thought represent our modes of corresponding successfully to problematic situations. The category of causation would not arise in life if there were not purposes to realize. So long as life is under habit, so long as there is no problem, there is no necessity for thought. The *real* is just what functions properly, and our thought-life exists for the purpose of securing the proper functioning or action. If, then, we test a plan of thought by an examination of the thought-process involved in its reconstruction, that simply means that we know these thought-processes have been evolved in experience and have been tested by past experience. The real is always that which will allow the will to attain its purpose, which will bring a unification and harmony of feeling into experience. The final test of reality is just this feeling.

Again, if we turn to that phase of experience which is peculiarly designated as the process of valuation, we must recognize that the whole elaboration of values is a process of judgment, is attained by the use of ideas, and, according to the laws of thought, is, in fact, a logical process. In a certain sense we may call every judg-

ment a value-judgment, since judgment is a process of evolving values, and it is just the meaning or value of an idea that is of use in the reasoning process. But experience not only elaborates a physical world, a world of means, but to meet the needs of the moral and religious life it must evolve new categories, posit a world of ends; and the process by which this is attained is peculiarly the process of valuation, and these judgments may be called value-judgments in differentiation from the judgments involved in the construction of the mere physical world. There is a cognitive element present in each desire as truly as in each sensation, and these value-judgments prove their objectivity in the same manner as the other judgments; that is, they are necessary for the attainment of the richest experience. At the same time, since the religious valuation arises only out of the religious experience, a subjective element is always characteristic of its judgments, and they cannot expect to attain the universality of the scientific or less personal judgments.

V

In a previous article I pointed out what I considered to be the metaphysical presuppositions of Ritschl. It now remains to ask whether the metaphysical or religious principle was primary with Ritschl, and what relation they hold to each other in his system. If we turn again to the students of Ritschl, we find a variety of opinions. Esslinger and Stählin regard the metaphysical as fundamental, and with the rejection of that the whole theological system is discredited. Orr and Steinbeck think Ritschl's metaphysical principles hold a vital place in his system and vitiate to a large degree his entire teaching, but especially his doctrine of God and the person and deity of Christ. Garvie thinks Ritschl's method may be characterized as biblo-spheric, christo-centric, and pisto-basic, and his metaphysical principles are not an organic part of his system. Wendland believes Ritschl's interests to be entirely historical, and he accepted the neo-Kantian philosophy because it seemed to give him support. All the disciples of Ritschl regard his theory of knowledge of very little importance in his theological thinking. Ecke holds the fundamental principles of Ritschl to be his return to the confessions of the early community as the fundamental norm for theo-

logical knowledge, his christo-centric method of treating dogmatics, and the characterization of the propositions of dogmatics as truths of salvation.

Traub regards Ritschl's interest as a historical one. He was profoundly impressed by his studies of the gospel and the works of Luther. It was here that he learned the peculiar character of religious knowledge, and then he sought for a theory of knowledge that would protect it from other knowledge. With this judgment Otto Ritschl³⁴ agrees. He tells us that the real foundation for his father's work is in his biblical and historical theology, and it was not till after he had formed his view of life and the world that he sought a justification for the formal side of his method. His theory of knowledge was really abstracted from his large work as the method which he actually, though perhaps unconsciously, pursued.

There is no question that the practical and ethical character of the philosophy of Lotze appealed strongly to Ritschl. And if Lotze's philosophy of religion is constructed on a purely rational basis, yet emphasis is placed on the knowledge that comes from values, and values are found in the historical. Though Ritschl makes all-important the supernatural revelation, it is a revelation of values which are possessed by the community and appropriated by the individual through faith. The very character of the neo-Kantian philosophy was such as to appeal to the historical student, and would in turn encourage the historical study. On the theological side Ritschl entered into that great heritage of Schleiermacher, and he learned from him that religion is *sui generis*, and its knowledge is not to be mixed with other knowledge. The religious, scientific, and philosophic thought of the age meet in Ritschl, and they all move in the practical direction.

Moreover, Ritschl himself was pre-eminently practical, and it was this bent that sent him to historical study; and his system is held together by the practical interests. The practical interest explains the influence of Ritschl. Professor James,³⁵ speaking of the metaphysical attributes of God, says:

From the point of view of practical religion, the metaphysical monster which they offer to our worship is an absolutely worthless invention of the scholarly

³⁴ Life of his father.

³⁵ *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

mind. The moral attributes stand on an entirely different footing; they positively determine fear and hope and expectation, and are the foundation for the saintly life.

It matters not whether we say the metaphysical or religious principle is primary for Ritschl, since the result is the same. For the metaphysical principle is a formal and regulative statement of the positive religious principle. The metaphysical principle excludes all the elementary knowledge of metaphysics from the field of theology, and forbids the method of metaphysics to the realm of theology. And the religious principle states that theological knowledge must be derived from historical revelation alone, and that one must be a member of the religious community in order to appropriate and interpret this revelation. The metaphysical principle possesses a critical function in theology, since it wards off ideas that grow on alien soil, and opposes any false claims of scientific knowledge or of a false metaphysics which seek to deny the validity of religious knowledge. Thus both the metaphysical and the religious principle work together for a practical and historical theology, and the religious world is indebted to Ritschl for a dogmatics which is a science of faith.